



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Culford School

January 2023

School's details

School	Culford School			
DfE number	935/6053			
Registered charity number	310486			
Address	Culford School Culford Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP28 6TX			
Telephone number	01284 728615			
Email address	hmpa@culford.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Julian Johnson-Munday			
Chair of governors	Air Vice Marshal Steve Abbott CBE			
Proprietor	Methodist Independent Schools Trust			
Age range	1 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	851			
	Day pupils	609	Boarders	242
	EYFS and Pre-prep	123	Preparatory	294
	Seniors	434		
Date of inspection	12 January 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Culford School is a co-educational day and boarding school located near Bury St Edmunds. The school is owned by the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, whose trustees are represented on the local designated governing body. The school consists of two nurseries for children aged 1 to 3 and 3 to 4 years; the pre-preparatory school for pupils aged 4 to 7 years; the preparatory for pupils aged 7 to 13 years; and the senior school for pupils aged 13 to 18 years. The school has 93 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities. None has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 122 pupils. The school's previous inspection was an inspection of compliance with educational quality in February 2020.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase its capacity from 810 to 885 pupils. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022 and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 10	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 20	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 4, paragraph 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	Met
Part 5, paragraph 23–30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 4	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 The school implements its policy effectively to ensure the safeguarding of the pupils. Arrangements are implemented effectively to ensure that pupils, including boarders and children in the EYFS, have adults to whom they can report their concerns in school. Concerns are referred on and acted upon swiftly, in line with locally agreed procedures. The school liaises appropriately with external agencies in the management of safeguarding issues, including those relating to adults working in the school. Parents are involved as appropriate.
- 2.5 Staff, including those with designated responsibilities or in leadership positions, are suitably trained, as are governors. Those interviewed demonstrated a secure understanding of the school's code of conduct for staff, including procedures for reporting concerns about adults working in the school. The school provides pupils with guidance about how to stay safe online and monitors the use of technology appropriately. Suitable procedures are implemented for the reporting and management of allegations of child-on-child abuse, including those which occur outside the school. The school promotes respect for others appropriately; sexually inappropriate language is discouraged and any incidents are dealt with effectively. Governors exercise suitable oversight of safeguarding through an annual review of policy and procedures.
- 2.6 Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 9]

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 Procedures to maintain health and safety are consistent with those required by relevant legislation and are implemented effectively. Appropriate checks are undertaken, recorded and monitored and any issues rectified promptly. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 10]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.
- 2.10 Appropriate measures are in place to comply with the requirements for fire safety. Suitable assessments of risk from fire are made and any issues rectified promptly. Equipment and alarms are checked regularly and fire drills are held with suitable regularity, including in boarding time. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 The number of staff available to supervise the pupils is appropriate for the current number of pupils in the school and boarders are suitably supervised overnight. Appropriate ratios are maintained in the EYFS. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 An appropriate risk assessment policy is implemented in the school and for external visits. No additional buildings will be required for the increased number of pupils included in the proposal for the material change. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

Premises and accommodation – [ISSR Part 5, paragraphs 23–30; NMS 4]

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.
- 2.18 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Existing teaching spaces and boarding accommodation are sufficient to accommodate the additional number of pupils proposed in the material change application safely. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.19 Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.20 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.21 The school meets the standards.
- 2.22 Leaders and managers have the required skills and knowledge to ensure the standards are met and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted. Planning for the increase in capacity is methodical

and appropriately focused. Evidence indicates that the standards are likely to remain met should the material change be approved.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

3.1 It is recommended that the school's application to increase its capacity to 885 pupils is approved.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the local chair of governors. She visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Karen Williams

Reporting inspector